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The BELIEVER made ripe for Death and
Glory in Life, by the Influence of the
Spirit and Grace of GOD.

A
S E R M O N,
OCCASIONED BY THE
D E A T H
O F

MISS MARY BAILEY,

An eminent Trophy of Divine Grace,

Who departed this Life JUNE the 17th, 1768.

In the Seventeenth Year of her Age.

PREACHED AT
The Meeting in Black's Fields, Southwark,
JUNE the 26th, 1768.

BY JOHN LANGFORD.

Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord. Rev. xiv. 13.

*Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive
me to glory.* Psalm lxxiii. 24.

This God is our God: he will be our guide even unto death.

Psalm xlviii. 14.

Published at the Request of her Friends, and those
who heard it.

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TO

MY HONoured FRIEND

MRS. BAILEY.

MADAM,

THE late affecting providence
with which you have been
visited, in the death of your dear
children, for some time lay with
great weight on my mind; and I
concluded, the stroke would prove
too heavy for you to bear: but that

A 2

God

iv DEDICATION.

God who gave the blow, hath given you strength to bare it ; and I rejoice to see how good the Lord is towards you, amidst those complicated troubles, which I am sensible you labour under : 'tis his hand : may you be silent,——I can heartily sympathize with you, and, as far as a weak instrument can, will help to comfort you : as an evidence thereof, I present you with the plain discourse I delivered on account of the death of your eldest daughter, in hopes that you and others may reap spiritual benefit from those solid truths, I have attempted to advance. —— If God should smile on, and bless my poor feeble endeavours, I shall think myself highly honoured of him.

As

DEDICATION. v

As to what reception it may meet with, from the carnal world, and nominal professors of religion, I do not pretend to determine, nor does it give me the least concern : but as there is no food in it for any others than heaven-born souls, I may expect nothing more from persons of the carnal and formal stamp than to be deemed a rank, furious Methodist: but be that as it may ; I send it into the world under the protection of Heaven ; and I am not afraid of men who are bold in the cause of the devil ; therefore I wholly commit it to the Lord, and if he blesses, none can curse : — to him also I commend you and your aged mother ; may you be supported under all your trials,
brought

vi DEDICATION.

brought safely through them, and at last be admitted into the world of glory, where you will for ever be out of the reach of sorrow, and meet your children, with all the glorified throng, never to part. — So prays

Your affectionate pastor

in Christ Jesus,

Southwark,
Aug. 13, 1768.

JOHN LANGFORD.



J O B

J O B V. 26.

Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in, in his season.

IT is a very just observation of the wise man, that in the midst of life we are in death ; and the truth of it is almost every day exemplified in our observation of God's dispensations in providence : for our life is a shadow that fleeth away, or like the morning grass under the mower's hand it is soon cut down, dried up, and withered : and even persons in the meridian, prime, and bloom of their days, are not exempt from the stroke of death, which may come upon us in a moment unexpectedly. Such, my friends, was the case of our dear young friend, who hath been taken from us out of time into an awful eternity, and whose death hath led me to the consideration of the words of our text. She was cut off in the bloom of life ; she did not live a life of threescore years and ten before the sentence came and took her from our world

world of time ; and thus are the words of revelation exemplified and fulfilled by the great God in the course of his providential dealings with men. — But not to attend to these excursions, I will hasten to take some view of, and touch upon the occasion of the words of our text ; and you will observe in the fourth chapter that Eliphaz the Temanite, one of Job's friends, engaged to give him some account why the Lord dealt with him in that awful way in which he did, in visiting him with such severe dispensations of providence. In order to which, he represents the present and future state of the wicked, as being truly miserable ; because, as they plow iniquity now, they will reap the fruit of it in the other world for ever ; verses 8th and 9th. He then proceeds to inform Job, that this is not the case of the righteous who fear God : though his hand may seem heavy upon them in afflictions, yet it is not with intent to destroy, but to correct them ; therefore he adds, in a few verses before our text, “ Behold, “ happy is the man whom God correcteth ; “ therefore despise not thou the chastning of “ the Almighty : For he maketh sore and “ bindeth up ; he woundeth, and his hands “ make whole. He shall deliver thee, in six “ troubles, and in seven there shall no hurt “ come nigh thee : in famine he shall deliver “ thee from death, and in war from the power “ of the sword.—Thou shalt be hid from the
“ scourge

“ scourge of tongues :” verses 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21. Thus he goes on to represent the blessings that attend those whom the Lord corrects, blessings in life and at death, and sums them up in the words of our text, and comforts Job by telling him that after God had done his work in and by him, and ripen’d him for glory, he should certainly be taken to it: “ Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in, in his season.”

In order that we may attend to the words, and the doctrine contained in them, for our comfort and improvement ; I think it necessary to make four brief observations in general from them ; and you will observe that the text consists of four important branches or observations.

First, In the text we have a place referred to and described, to which Job was hastening, *the grave* : this place, Sirs, is the house appointed for all living : the living know that they must die ; the graves are ready for them ; happy are they that are ready for the grave. This place to which Eliphaz refers, and which he describes, is that which is continually crying, Give, give ; and will be so till all the sons and daughters of men are embowell’d in it. Now he might mention this to Job by way of comfort and consolation, to give him to understand that he should in a little time go from the place and the per-

sons that now knew him, and they should know him no more; that the grave would put a final period to all his sorrows, to all his distresses, temptations, and trials he was exposed to; that he should lie entomb'd in the bowels of the earth 'till the trump of God sounds, and he be raised.

Secondly, The manner described: Thou shalt go; thou shalt go voluntarily, thou shalt not be forced: as if Eliphaz had said: If thou art enabled to eye the hand of God in all his dispensations towards thee, thou wilt see it is well done, because the Lord hath done it. When death comes to do his office upon thee, thou shalt go to thy grave like a volunteer, in joyful expectation of meeting the Lord in the air.

Thirdly, The time is here pointed out; in a full age: "Thou shalt go to thy grave in a full age." This full age which Eliphaz refers to may contain in it several ideas; it may either refer, 1. To his being in the fulness of his days; that is, his days allotted him upon the earth should be fulfilled. And whenever God in his providence calls a son or daughter of Adam to the grave, it may properly be called a full age. 2. It may intend that it should be when he was in full prosperity; for death has no respect of persons or circumstances. When the barns are full, when all things are set in order, when the soul is promising itself ease, pleasure, and prosperity in the

the present state, and in the language of the fool in the gospel says, "Soul, eat, drink, and take thy ease: I will pull down my barns and build greater;" then the solemn sentence may come, "Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee," *Luke xii. 20.* Or, 3^{dly}, I apprehend it may refer to that state of meetness or ripeness in which he should be found for glory; for to this the metaphor seems principally to refer; "Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age like a shock of corn, &c." thou shalt be ripe, whether it be in a time of youth or prosperity; it is the very time thou art ripe for glory, and God will bring thee to it. The

Fourth and last observation in general I would make from the words is, that the nature and manner of his death is represented by a fit and striking metaphor, "Like a shock of corn, &c." not as a shock of thorns, but "corn;" not as brambles that are gathered together for eternal burnings, but as a shock of corn, worthy to be preserved. And you will observe (what I just hinted) that the full age spoken of in the text must refer to the time when God sees that the soul is fitted for glory in Heaven; then, and not till then, shall the soul be removed. The word in the Hebrew signifies—as a shock of corn *ascends*, which renders it doubly beautiful. When the corn is fit for harvest, the reapers cut and gather it in their arms; it is then made into sheaves and shocks (as in the words of the text),

and bound up and safely housed in the barn, So it is with the Lord's people; their souls at death go to God that gave them, their bodies into the chambers of the grave, till Christ, at his second appearing, own and claim them as his property; then shall their bodies and souls ascend with him to glory. These things, I humbly conceive, contain the general sense of the text, from which an important doctrinal observation may with great propriety be deduced; and which, as God may afford assistance, I will enlarge on and improve, in a manner suitable to the present occasion:

Namely, That whatever the saints or children of God meet with in this life of an afflictive nature, is to ripen or make them fit for a future world of happiness beyond the grave; and their continuance in it is no longer than till that fitness shall be fully accomplished by the blessed God. For the enlargement of these points it will be necessary to consider the six following things:

First, Show who the persons are whom God in this world makes meet for glory in Heaven.

Secondly, The ways and means which the Lord useth in order to fit them for this state of glory.

Thirdly, Point out to you how this meetness for Heaven is manifested, or how the accomplishment of it is displayed.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, Prove that when the saints have but the least view of their right and title to glory, and some sweet foretastes of it, they long for and meet death as a kind friend, with the greatest composure and delight.

Fifthly, Exemplify these truths from the case of our dear departed young friend, whose death occasioned the discussion of this subject.

Sixthly and lastly, Conclude with some inferences, as an improvement of the subject, and the awful providence that led us to consider it.

In the *first* place I am to consider, who the persons are that God in this world fits for a better, or makes meet for a better, namely, that of glory in Heaven. I have observed in the doctrinal note, that they are the saints or people of God, whom he makes meet for eternal glory with him in Heaven. I suppose you that read your Bible (wherein the word is so often mentioned) know what the meaning of the term Saint is; and whatever scoffers at religion may think of it, it is an honourable name indeed! and is that in which you and I ought to glory, and never be ashamed of it. Under the general meaning of the word, it is descriptive of persons that are opposed to the wicked of the earth; so it is spoken of, 1 Sam. ii. 9. "He will keep the feet of his saints, but
" the wicked (that is, persons opposed to this
" character of saints) they shall be silent in
" dark-

“darkness;” and if you look into and compare 1 *Cor.* i. 2. with *Phil.* i. 2. there you will see it signifies persons sanctified by the grace of God, and called by the power thereof out of darkness into light, made savingly acquainted with the Lord Jesus Christ. Time will not permit me to give you that full definition of the word that it may deserve; I shall only say that it signifies and imports persons that fear the Lord; that are by the grace and spirit of God led to trust in him; that have seen the filth of their own hearts, the abominable nature of sin, and the righteousness of Christ that he has wrought out for them. These are the persons that are fitted in life for glory at and after death. Perhaps you will ask why these persons that follow the Lord, that love, that fear, and serve him, are to partake of Heaven and Glory, more than other men: I shall only assign two reasons to solve such an inquiry. 1. Because they are chosen in Christ as heirs of it, *Rom.* viii. 17. “And
 “if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and
 “joint heirs with Christ Jesus: if so be that
 “we suffer with him, that we may also be
 “glorified together;” compared with *James* ii. 5. “Hearken, my beloved brethren; Hath
 “not God chosen the poor of this world,
 “rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom,
 “which he promised to them that love him?” This is one reason why the Lord will meeten his saints for glory, because they are heirs of it, and are chosen in Christ to be partakers of
 it,

it, and shall never be disinherited of this kingdom. Another reason is, because it is made over to them by great and precious promises, see *Luke* xxii. 29. “ And I appoint unto you
“ a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed
“ unto me.” What kingdom? why a heavenly kingdom, that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for us, 1 *Pet.* i. 4. Of this appointment of God the Father you have a large account, *John* xiv. 2, 3. “ In my Father’s house
“ are many mansions: if it were not so I
“ would have told you: I go to prepare a
“ place for you; and if I go to prepare a place
“ for you, I will come again and receive you
“ to myself, that where I am there you may
“ be also.” O! what blessed promises are these, Sirs: if you and I do but see our interest in them, they will make our hearts leap for joy. Compare these with *John* x. 27, 28.
“ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them,
“ and they follow me, and I give unto them
“ eternal life; and they shall never perish,
“ neither shall any man pluck them out of
“ my hand. My Father which gave them
“ me is greater than all, and none shall be
“ able to pluck them out of my Father’s
“ hand.” But I must hasten to the second general head,—namely,

Secondly, To point out the ways and means the Lord useth in order to train up his saints for enjoying this kingdom; or, in other words, what are the ways through which they are led
and

and trained up for this state of glory hereafter. Let it not dismay you when I say, that it is a very rough way in which the Lord leads his people; many thorns and briers, distresses and afflictions, are to be met with in it: for “it is through much tribulation that you must inherit the kingdom of God,” *Acts* xiv. 22. Some represent the way as very smooth and easy; but give me leave to say, if you are saints, you will find it is a rough way, though a right way, to the city of habitation, *Psal* cvii. 7. The Lord by very dark distressing providences leads his people to the enjoyment of Heaven and Glory above. I can only say (because your time is short) by ordinances and by providences through the influence of the spirit of grace the Lord Jesus Christ trains up his people for glory: and the former, namely, providences, are not a little severe. And the children of God, in every period of time, have found the way they must walk to get to the promised rest is through a wilderness world, wherein they meet with the howlings and assaults from the enemies to which they are exposed, and very dark scenes of providence. I cannot, nor do I pretend, in a single discourse, to point out to you the different methods of divine providence, in which the Lord leads his people: let it be sufficient to say, “his ways are in the sea, and his footsteps in the mighty waters,” *Psal*. lxxvii. 19. There is not a providence, however dark and intricate, that

that you are now labouring under, but you will one day or other see reason to bless God for ; for though it is a dark, a cross, a rugged way, it is the way the Lord thinks fit to lead you to glory, by the providences of his hand, and the ordinances of his house. In the church militant the saints are trained up for the church triumphant : ordinances and providences, with the operations of the divine spirit and grace of God, will make you and I mete for the glory of the saints in light. And while we are in the church militant, in the school of Christ, he is our great head and teacher ; and though you and I have learnt but very little in this school, we are but meer blockheads indeed if we have not learnt that the Lord Jesus Christ, the great head and king of his church, works in his people “ all the “ good pleasure of his goodness, and the work “ of faith with power ;” 2 *Theff.* i. 11. and will, when he hath brought them through the mire and thick clay, through many dark dispensations, bring them sweetly and safely to himself : there, Christian, all darkness will be done away ; there, Christian, the night will cease, and all sorrows shall be at an end, and you will see the reason why God has thus dealt with you. Which leads me,

Thirdly, To point out to you how this meetness is manifested, or wherein it consists, and how the accomplishment of it is displayed. There is a meetening time before this

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meetness can be accomplished: the corn (to use the words of the text) that cometh in, in his season, does not come in before its season of ripeness; it endures many a blast before harvest-time. So it is with the Christian: there is a meetening, a ripening time for you; and you may depend upon it, you will not be taken from this world till that time is accomplished. But in order to shew you wherein this meetness consists, I would observe,

1st, This meetness for heaven, which is by the spirit wrought in the soul, consists in spiritual and heavenly-mindedness. The apostle exhorts; "Let your conversation be in heaven;" and the more our hearts, affections, and conversations are fixed on, and delight in heaven and heavenly things, it is evident we are in some good measure of fitness for it.

2^{dly}, Great deadness to this world is another part of this meetness: this is a consequence of the former; for when our hearts are in heaven, our desires are there, and we must in consequence be dead to this world. On the other hand, the more you and I are swallowed up by and taken with the world and its enjoyments, the less we find of spiritual-mindedness: but the more you and I are deadened to the world, we shall grow like our God, like our Christ, and long for our glory.

3^{dly},

3dly, Longing desires after God, Christ and glory, is certainly another part of this meetness. To this purpose the apostle, that man who was influenced by divine grace, and was taught by the divine spirit, speaks; "I long to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better;" and the Christian knows by happy experience, that when he can get near to Christ here below, it is so much the better for him, and it will be eminently best of all when he gets nearest of all to him in glory.

Ah! Sirs, you are but like the door upon its hinges; whatever splendid professions you may make in the world, if your hearts are not longing after Christ, if you are not enamoured with his beauty, if you are not panting after the full enjoyment of him in glory, if you are not desirous to be gone where he is to behold his glory, you have made but little progressions in the divine life; for I am sure of it, the more the spirit of God leads you to see the insufficiency of all creature-comforts and enjoyments here below, the more you will be led to see that nothing is worthy your notice but the Lord Jesus Christ. Heaven-glory and Christ are substantials, but nothing below is worthy the name of substance; every thing here is but as a shadow that passeth away.

4thly, A heart full of enmity against sin is certainly another part of this meetness for heaven: O! my friends, how little of this meetness is to be seen in you and me; how

little of that holy disposition of mind that was in the Lord Jesus Christ; and I am sure of it, if we had but more realizing views of glory, and more of the love of Christ shed in our hearts, and greater desires after him, after God and glory, how should we then hate sin: This language an apostle uttered, and I am sure it is the true case of all the saints, *Rom. vii.* towards the end: "Oh! wretched man that
" I am, who shall deliver me from the body of
" this death?" Why did the apostle thus bemoan his dismal case, if it did not arise from a desire to get rid of sin? It is this which constitutes the happiness of the saints in glory, they have got rid of sin; and that man is not a saint that loves sin, whatever his professions are; therefore we need not wonder when we see persons who have nothing more than an outward profession roll sin like a sweet morsel under their tongues: it is not so with the Christian, with a soul born from above, with a man born for heaven and eternity; he wants to have this meetness for heaven more apparent, in his hatred to all sin; and saints not only want the condemning power of sin removed, but they want to get rid of the reigning power of it. But I must observe again in the

5th place, That this meetness for heaven consists, in a sweet familiarity with death, the grave and eternity. Yes, this is the true temper and disposition of the man that is ripening

ripening for heaven: as he hath a deadness to the world and all things here below, a flaming love to Christ, and utter enmity against sin; so also he hath a sweet familiarity with death, because the more he grows in acquaintance with the Lord Jesus Christ, the more distinct views he has of the power of death, which is sin, as being taken away. This made Job cry out, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come," Chap. xiv. 14. He aimed to have a constant familiarity with death, and made it his constant companion as it were. It is otherwise with the wicked and ungodly part of mankind; they almost dread to see a grave, shudder at a coffin: tell them of appearing at the tribunal bar, they will tell you, you are an enthusiast or methodist; but speak of it to a soul that pants after the enjoyment of heaven, that longs to be free from all sin, and it will be agreeable to him. Jacob and all the patriarchs had this sweet familiarity with death; and after he had seen his dear beloved son Joseph, how did he familiarize himself with death and the grave. It is said of him, in the xlviiith of Genesis, "the time drew nigh, that he must die:" he was not afraid of it, he could rather bid defiance to it with the apostle Paul, "O death, where is thy sting." I allow that many of the saints who are really meeting for glory below, oftentimes live in bondage through fear of death:

death : this does not remove the truth just asserted, that they have a familiarity with death ; it is their natures are afraid of death, not their souls ; their souls triumph in the views of it, knowing it will land the soul in glory. But there is one thing more that I must observe, and that is, that another branch of this meetness is great humility, arising from a sense of the grace and favour of God ; and also from a sense of the little prevalency these things have in the heart. If any soul can be said to be ripening for glory, it is the man that goes daily and hourly bowed down under a sense of his own unworthiness : says such a soul, the mercies of the Lord are great to me, the love of Christ is great, as displayed towards me, in giving such a rebel as I am an interest in his love ; but yet I am ungrateful, unfruitful, unprofitable, a cumberer of the ground, not worthy to be called his servant, much less his son.

Therefore, a sense of these things humbles a soul in the dust, and he cries out in the language of Job for these things ; “ I repent and “ abhor myself in dust and ashes : ” and if there is not a spiritual-mindedness, if there is not that deadness to the world, if there is not this longing after God and Christ, if the heart is not so full of enmity against sin, so full of sweet converse with death and the grave, as the poor saint could wish, and he is humbled under a sense of these things ; it is an
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an evidence that he is ripening for glory, he is humbled that his heart is no more conversant with these heavenly subjects, and with that employment he, in a little time, will be engaged in beyond the grave: this then is the first part of the third proposition, *viz.* wherein this meetness for glory consists.

I am now to lay before you the accomplishment of this meetness; and give me leave to say, it is not displayed till death, that grim monster, is sent to dislodge the soul from the body, and give it its dismissal from the tenement of clay, into the world of spirits. The accomplishment of our meetness for heaven is never manifested till death: so runs the beautiful metaphor in our text, Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, and that shall be when thou art ripe for glory; for it shall be as a shock of corn cometh in his season, (the husbandman would be a madman to cut down the corn before it was fully ripe;) so the Lord Jehovah never does cut down any one of his dear children till this meetness is accomplished: it is true, some of God's children are cut down in their younger years, but they are meet for glory. God will do his work in, and by his people, and then take them to himself; and surely this is a fulness of age, or is as a shock of corn ripe in his season; for the believer who is cut down in his younger years, is as ripe for glory as the old man in Christ. God can do a great deal
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of work in a little time ; he can make them ripe for glory soon after they are new born. So that the time of death, whenever it comes, is a time when the ripe or full age of the soul is manifested and displayed as fully ready for glory. Let the young Christian know and be assured, that under the most cutting afflictions thou shalt be continued in and thro' all : there will not be one grain of affliction spared, not one twig of the rod took away, not one stroke abated, till thou art fully ripen'd for eternal happiness. I am now led to the

Fourth general Head, And that is, to shew you, that when the saints have but the least view of their right and title to glory (and some foretastes of it) they long for, and meet death as a kind friend, with the greatest composure and delight.

And are there not precious seasons, when the saint can read his interest and title clear in the Lamb's Book of Life ? Are there not some special seasons when the soul can say as the apostle did, He loved me, and gave himself for me ? If this should not be the case, yet is not the language of every saint in this assembly, that he desires to love God more, and to see his interest more clear, to see his evidence more resplendent ? where is the saint, even the babe in grace, who dares not say but that he longs to love Christ more, wants to be made more meet for glory ? No wonder when this is the case, and the soul is
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all alive to God, that it longs for death, meets it with the greatest composure, delight, and serenity of soul: but the three following considerations may serve to illustrate this truth, because,

First, Death will free their souls from sin and sorrow, as I observed to you before: this is the desire of every true believer, that he may get rid of sin; and as he knows he cannot get rid of it while in the present state of imperfection, he longs for death, inasmuch as that season will free him for ever from it; and as sorrow is the consequence of sin, it is no wonder that the believer longs for death, in order to put a stop to sin, that its effects may cease: all sorrows are the consequence of sin, they all proceed from it: there is not a groan, a sorrow of the believer but is the consequence of sin, and his greatest sorrow is remaining sin; therefore 'tis no wonder he wants to get from it.

Secondly, Death not only will free the soul from sin and sorrow, but lodge it in the realms of light and life for ever: the believer may long, well long for death, especially when he has realizing views of glory and his interest in it, because death will land his soul safe in the regions of light, joy, and love for ever: there is joy there, I mean at the right-hand of God, in the presence of Christ, that flows for ever and ever: Joy that never cloy, joy that is without ceasing; and without in-

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termiffion, joy that can never be exhausted, but will be for ever new, and yet fatisfying.

Thirdly, They may long for death, becaufe they will then be with him whom they love and adore, and behold him without any intermiffion, and love and praife him for ever. Sure this is enough to raife your hearts and mine into fuch rapturous language as that of the apoftle, I would rather depart and be with Chrift, depart to that place where I fhall be freed from thefe clouds, thefe fcenes of forrow and diftrefs, thefe intercepting clouds, that hide my God from me; O, fays the foul, if I could but take my flight to yonder world, I fhould there behold him whom I now fee through a glafs darkly; I fhall fee him with the vail taken from between us, and have my foul fpiritualized to behold him in all his glory: here below the faints, the people of God, have but a faint view of the eternal world; and if they have now and then a glimpfe of glory here, it is but for a moment; but there, in the world of glory, they fhall enjoy glory for ever and ever: here below our tongues fail in praifing God: we are here foon tired in his fervice; but then, when we get to glory, we fhall praife and blefs the Lord for ever and ever without wearinefs.

Oh! happy day: the Lord fit us all for that period.—But I muft now proceed to the fifth general head:

Fifthly, To exemplify the truth of these things from the case of our dear friend, whose death occasioned the discussion of them ; and truly this is the most difficult part of the task allotted to me at this time ; not that I am ashamed or afraid to declare, that I doubt not but that her soul is landed safe in the world of glory, of which I have spoken ; and that she is now beholding the face of her Father and her God. But when I consider that many who are now present, are come as mockers of the word, I am led to call it the most difficult part of my work, fearing they will put false constructions upon what may be delivered ; but be that as it may, I leave it to God, who knows my heart, and I will declare, that the truths I have specified, were fully exemplified in the experience of our deceased friend. How long she had been under serious impressions about her soul, I do not take upon me to determine, nor indeed is it very material. This I can safely affirm, that in all my life, I never beheld such an instance of patience under, and submission to the will of God, which she was enabled to manifest under a pining consumption for six months ; how she was wrought upon to think on the situation of her soul, is not material to mention : I believe she was wrought upon by the love and grace of God : my meaning is, that she was drawn with the cords of love, and not driven to Christ with those

horrors which some have felt. I know not how to give you a better description of the Lord's working upon her soul, or the manner in which she was brought to an acquaintance with him, than in scripture-language, which seemed to be fulfilled in her : " Behold, I
" have refined thee, but not with silver ; I
" have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." This was eminently fulfilled to her in a season of affliction, and her extremity was God's opportunity ; whether it was so or not, those that were more constant in their attendance upon her, than myself, can best tell ; or it might be in that manner which the Lord promised he will work upon his people, *Hosea* ii. 14. " Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness,
" and speak comfortably to her." I think this was her case and state, for she was brought with a witness into the wilderness, lying oppressed with a pining consumption (as I have observed) for six months : the Lord brought her there, and spake comfortably to her by his spirit, and allured her with the allurements of his love ; and here permit me to refer you to the xvth of *Ezekiel*, 6th and following verses, as I conceive the Lord dealt with her soul in the same way and manner : " And when I
" passed by thee, and saw thee polluted, and
" in thy blood, I said unto thee, when thou
" wast in thy blood, live." She was a descendant of a guilty and apostate head, was
polluted

polluted in her blood ; and whenever the Lord worked upon her by his spirit, it was the time of love ; then he said to her, by his powerful spirit, Daughter, live. But I would now view the closing scenes of her life ; and I hope, if the giving vent to natural affection, or a quivering lip, should produce brokenness of speech, I humbly hope the candid hearer will pardon it ; for the distress in which I beheld her for three months, if I have not a heart of stone, must, at the recollection of it, extort a tear now she is gone.

According to the accounts I have received, I am informed, that the time the disorder first seized her was about six months since. A pining consumption brought her down by degrees to the chambers of the grave ; and notwithstanding death seemed to make slow advances upon her, yet she never seemed in the least discomposed at its awful approach, but rather triumphed in the view of it. I believe I don't utter more than truth when I say, that a murmuring word was not once heard to proceed from her lips ; and let me say, it is a great thing for a person on a bed of languishing, in the bloom and prime of life, going to be taken from the enjoyment of all her friends, not to murmur or repine ; a great thing indeed ! and which nothing but the grace of God could teach her to do. It is very little more than three months since I was first call'd to visit her, I well knew she had attended
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here for some time under the word (and some of you know she was engaged in catechising in this place upon the Lord's-day evenings); but I had never any conceptions, from what I heard, that any serious impressions were made upon her heart: how long the Lord was making them, is only known to himself. The word might lie a long time in her heart, and this time of affliction, possibly, was the season for it to spring forth. However, I shall never forget, I hope, the first time in which I was call'd to visit her in providence. Some alarm to me it was to behold a person, just turned of sixteen years of age, almost worn out with a pining consumption: but that which I hope never to forget, was the expressions that proceeded from her lips, respecting the expected moment of her death, and that seeming resentment that appeared to flow from her heart and lips against persons that wished her life to continue. I asked her whether she was not alarmed at the approach of death? she replied, in language that indicated satisfaction and pleasure, that she was not only led to see its sting taken away, but was also delivered from the fear of it. There are many can say the former, but not the latter; such are all their life-time, through fear of death, kept in bondage. But her frequent intimations to friends, and many that attended her during her long illness, plainly intimated that she came up to the character described in the text, and
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was almost like a shock of corn fully ripe. About two months before her death, I was hastily call'd to visit her; the disorder making such hasty advances on her, that she and all her friends apprehended death was near. It was at that time she fixt upon the words of the text, and desired I would preach her funeral sermon from them: and I make no doubt, but that our dear young friend knew experimentally the meaning of the words in her heart; and now they are fully explained to her in Heaven. In the course of providence I was call'd from my dear dying friend for about a fortnight's stay in the country. When I left her, I did not think I should see her again in this world; and I was not deceived, for it pleased the Lord to cause her soul sweetly to sleep in Jesus, on the very morning of that day upon which I returned to town. And now she is gone to the enjoyment of a fulness of pleasure, at the right hand of God, where are pleasures for evermore. I have been informed, by those who attended her in her last moments, that many remarkable expressions dropt from her lips a few days before and on the day of her dissolution, which I will now mention. I have hinted to you, that she always expressed a resentment when persons talked at times of hopes of recovery, which is a method too commonly practised by many, under a notion of friendship to their sick friends, when in fact it is an act of the greatest

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unkindness; as it tends to lead to anxiety and vain expectations of life when death is very near, and a carelessness about the soul ensues. But to proceed: Our young friend was not, by all that could be said, fed up with false hopes of life; she well knew how fast nature decayed, and her reply to all that attempted it, was, "No, I disdain the thought; I know "I cannot live, nor do I want to live." In the last conversation I had with her, she expressed herself to this purpose: "I am (said she) meetening for glory, and have such "views of it that I wish to be gone." Thus she came in a full age to the grave, as a shock of corn cometh in, in its season. She explained the passage, and told me she knew she should stay till she was ripe for glory; and when that moment was accomplished, God would take her to himself. But that which proceeded from her lips a little before her dissolution (I believe a few days), was, I think, as fully expressive of the sense of the text as possible. In order to introduce it, I must inform you, that her dear infant sister was this day fortnight laid in the grave: though seized with a threatening disorder but a few weeks since, yet it was the pleasure of God to take her first. She died, as I am informed, in the arms of our dear friend, who said she should soon meet her in glory. But what I have principally in view, is what passed on the day of the child's funeral, when her dear mother, having occasion

casion to prepare mourning apparel, in order to attend the funeral, our young friend seeing the preparations, spoke thus to her mother:
“ Ah, mother! I shall no longer want any
“ thing black, but shall be ere long cloathed
“ in a white robe, without spot or wrinkle *.”

* These, with many more equally remarkable expressions, were what proceeded from the lips of this young Christian; but as I did not commit them to writing, I must here acknowledge, that the treachery of my memory, and the multiplicity of thoughts in my mind at the time I delivered this sermon, caused me to omit many things which I intended to have delivered. However, as I am conscious that, on the one hand, I have not wilfully omitted any circumstance very material, nor, on the other, exaggerated in the relation I have given in any one instance, or gone beyond the boundaries of truth, I may hope that those, who heard this sermon delivered from the pulpit, and those who may read it, will candidly pardon the author for any and every seeming omission. But I think it not improper to observe to my readers, that it was the pleasure of the Lord to keep our young friend in a peaceable state of mind during her whole illness; and the enemy of her soul was not permitted to tempt or distress her in the manner he doth some of God's children: yet she was not wholly exempt from his assaults; for at one time she told me she had been in great distress, because she feared her former experience was but a delusion, and she could not discern so great a willingness in Christ to save *her*, so great a sinner, as she had before done. On this account her soul was heavy and sorrowful; but though Satan took an advantage of her in this season, to tempt and distress her, she was enabled to take fresh comfort from this thought, that none ever came to Christ and were cast out; “ To him therefore (said she) I hope
“ I have been enabled to go; and if I perish, I perish.” Thus was her enemy, in his first and last assault, disappointed; and he shall vex her soul no more for ever.

And her expressions were so sweet and remarkable, that I think those who were witnesses to them can never forget them. Upon the whole, I think I never shall forget (if I know my own heart) this great work, which the Lord wrought upon this young person. Under the disorders of body with which she laboured, one would have thought she had enough to do to struggle with dying nature; but her heart was all composure: she seemed to have Heaven begun below, being swallowed up in the will of her God. Thus, I think, without any further enlargement, the truth of the text and doctrine drawn from it is sufficiently exemplified; that what the saints or people of God meet with in this life, is to ripen or make them fit for a future world of happiness beyond the grave; and their continuance here is no longer than till that fitness is fully accomplished. But I must hasten,

Lastly, To make some improvement of the subject, and solemn providence that occasioned the discussion of it (as proposed).

And, *first*, By way of inquiry. Are we of the happy number of the persons first spoken of? (Saints.) When I look round this assembly, I fear there are many here that attended the grave of our departed friend, that are nothing but scoffers, bidding defiance to death and eternity. Let me tell you, young as you are, you are not too young for death; and if you are not found among the number I have described, you are undone for ever.

Secondly,

Secondly, If any of us, upon serious inquiry, have just cause to conclude we are of this happy number, how happy, highly favoured, and beloved of the Lord indeed! And from what has been said, you may infer there is the greatest reason for you to abate your sorrow and heighten your joy: if you are saints, God is meetening you for glory; if you are of the happy number described, you are only passing through this vale of tears to a world of glory. Young saints, you may have many years to pass through this wilderness, you may not be ripened so soon as our young friend, yet you are safe; at last you shall be landed safe in the heavenly kingdom, you shall be for ever with the Lord to behold his glory, and see the face of our young friend with comfort, never more to part: and aged Christians, who have borne the burden and heat of the day, let me refer you to the metaphor in the text: Did you never observe the corn in the field, that when it is almost ripe and fit for harvest, the ears are very heavy, and are bowed down and bent by every blast? This is the case of the aged Christian. You are ready to say, with every storm of temptation you meet with, I shall never reach the heavenly inheritance: but in a little time you shall get to the haven of rest; a few more distresses beating upon the soul, and all shall be over. You are the only happy persons in life; for there is a period that will put an end to all your sorrows: you can, in the

language of holy Job, say, I know that my Redeemer liveth, therefore the sorrows of death shall not make me afraid.

Thirdly, We may infer, from what has been said, the unhappiness and misery of all such who love the ways of sin; for they shall have its wages. Let such remember, tho' the saints are ripening for glory, you are ripening for destruction; you are ripening for eternal flames, and will by and by be gathered into bundles and burnt. So our Lord represents it in the parable, *Matt. xiii. 39, 40, 41*. "That the angels shall come forth and gather the wheat into barns, but the chaff shall be burnt with unquenchable fire." Remember this, my hearers, and ask your souls this very important question, Shall I be like a shock of corn or thorns? Oh! consider, consider, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver. Oh! consider (ye that are now come hither out of curiosity, to hear what has been said of our departed friend) this may be the last sabbath you may have upon this earth: remember you must give an account of this sermon; and how will it be with your souls, when you must stand naked before God? But I will only draw a few inferences from the solemn providence that occasioned this discourse, and then conclude.

First, I would, with humility, address you, the surviving relations of our departed young friend: You see that there is great cause to rejoice,

joice, even under this heavy affliction. Your dear daughter is gone into the bosom of Jesus; and you shall one day, if you are followers of Jesus, meet her, and be with her for ever, never more to part. I say, the way and manner, in which, through grace, she was taught to die, should teach you to dry up your tears. I don't mean you should be Stoicks, unaffected under such a providence; but moderate your sorrow, and weep not for her (principally) but for yourselves; weep not for her, she is gone to glory, to the enjoyment of her God. Consider whether you are ready to follow her. And here I must address the relations distinctly: Let me drop a word in the ears of her father; and remember, Sir, the voice of your daughter's death now calls to you: Are the only two branches cut off, the youngest and the eldest? Oh, Sir! think ere long the root must be rooted up; you must go to the silent grave in a little time: God may call upon you before the sun ariseth, to come to his bar. Oh! unhappy for you, if you are of that unhappy number who spurn against God, trifle with his providence, and despise his grace. And you, the very affectionate mother of my deceased young friend, in what terms shall I address you? I am sensible the loss you have sustained is great, and am well persuaded that parental grief and sorrow for the loss of promising children, must be proportionably great. I heartily sympathize with you, and wish you
divine

divine support ; yet reason as David did on a like occasion, and say, Wherefore should I mourn since she cannot return to me, but I must go to her. Dry up your tears ; remember it is the hand of God has done it. Pray for grace, to submit to his will, and to prepare you to go to her. You, my honoured and ancient friend, that saw two sisters die in so short a time, your age and infirmity, attended with these awful circumstances, must necessarily bow you down to the grave. Bless God they were not cut off before they were ready to die : bless God that you saw your dear grand-children go before you to the world of glory. And you, the other relations, a word to you and I have done : Remember this providence, which hath call'd you together at this time, and occasioned you to be cloathed in mourning ; remember this providence speaks aloud, “ Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the son of man shall come.” But I must address myself to my young friends, who were the acquaintance of the deceased : even the youngest of you, of eight or nine years of age, may be at a full age, for what you know : unhappy for you if you are cut down in the midst of your days and of your sins. O ! that I could speak something to wound your hearts, so as to drive you to Christ, and lead you to see your lost undone condition, you that were her intimates in the flesh. You are going to her, though she can never
come

come to you ; you are going into the grave. For God's sake ! for Christ's sake ! for your souls sake ! consider how it stands between God and your souls. May I not address myself to the aged as well as the young sinner ? You are either ripening for glory or destruction, fitting for Heaven or Hell. Are there not many grey-headed sinners in this assembly ? O, sinner, let me speak to you now, as I may never have another opportunity of speaking to you again. I must declare to you, that if you are brought to the grave in a full age, full of days, full of years, and full of sins, you will be bound fast in the prison of Hell for ever. Consider this, ye mockers of God and his people, and dare not to rush upon the thick bosses of his buckler. It is very dangerous trifling with God ; for when he ariseth out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth, he will tear the sinner as a lion teareth his prey, and none shall deliver. Time and life are short : death is hastening, eternity is approaching. I must say one word, and leave it with you all. Behold the father, the mother, the grandmother, and the aunt, all clad in mourning ; and it should lead you to ask, what enemy hath done this ? I will answer such an inquiry, by informing you, that the enemy death hath smitten two corners of the house ; that monster, who may call at your door next, perhaps before you lay yourselves down to sleep. Come he may, and with his cold arm take
you

you at once. Oh! may the Lord the spirit so teach you to number your days, as that you may apply your hearts to wisdom. And if you have that wisdom, you will not have reason to fear death, but will meet him as your friend; and will, with every true believer, triumph and exult in the language of the Apostle, 2 Cor. v. 1. (with which I conclude) "For
" we know that if this earthly house of our
" tabernacle were dissolved, we have a build-
" ing of God, a house not made with hands,
" eternal in the Heavens."



T H E E N D.

